

TIME FLIES- A STATEMENT THAT BEST APPLIES TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study was to investigate how do principals of a sample of private schools (N= 60) utilize and manage their time on daily-basis. A survey consisting of three sections attempted to collect data pertaining to demographic characteristics of participants, how they spend time on organizational/management tasks versus time expenditure on instructional tasks. SPSS 18.0 was used to analyze data. Results indicate that principals lacked basic time management skills and that the time they spent on organizational/management was far more than that they consumed on instructional tasks. Implications and recommendations are provided at the end of the study.*

KEYWORDS: time-management, principals, instructional leadership, school management

INTRODUCTION

School leadership is a complex and demanding position requiring sophisticated skills of dealing with increasingly complex school environments and changing job demands (Goodstein, 2011). In such multifarious environments, principals handle a multitude of tasks on a daily-basis which necessitates the effective use of time-management skills so as to ensure success and longevity (Crouch, 2005; Hemphill, 2000). However, much of the available educational time management research indicates that there are not enough hours in a day for principals to accomplish everything that needs to be done (Buck, 2003). Studies have shown that school leaders waste time on low priority tasks, often without realizing it (Hager, 2006). Kergaard (1991) identifies four major areas that can take up a school leader's time which include: office traffic, telephone, organization and discipline. With the lack of time-management, instructional leadership is the role that is often dropped from principals' menus of tasks (Oosterlynck, 2011). School leaders need to develop time management strategies by planning a daily calendar to get organized, set priorities, master delegation and not be afraid to say "no" (Crouch, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

Time is a scarce resource, and school principals must be able to allocate their time among these competing demands. Time-use decisions are important for effective leadership, as evidenced by the relationship between principal time use and school outcomes (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2012; Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010).

The literature suggests that better time management skills; which include the ability to set achievable goals, identify priorities, monitor one's own progress, and remain organized

(Claessens et al., 2007); can lead to more effective time use and ultimately more positive individual outcomes in some settings (Britton & Tesser, 1991).

Consequently, the purpose of this study was to investigate how do appreciable samples of Lebanese private school principals manage their time on daily-basis. The research question addressed in this study was: To what extent do Lebanese private school principals utilize time-management skills in their daily routine at school?

Importance of the Study

The results of the study may be used to identify problematic areas of time management of a selected sample of Lebanese private school principals and hence could provide recommendations to support principals in balancing time in a more efficient manner.

While numerous researchers have addressed the topic of time management within the business sector, very few have studied it within the school setting (Allen, 2001; Braiker, 2001; Douglas & Douglas, 1994). Therefore, given the differences that exist between the business sector and schools, it is essential that research addresses time management to better support and prepare principals. In addition, there are no studies that have addressed the time-management issue within the Lebanese school setting, which adds to the importance of this study.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Pitfalls with Time Management

Time management can be viewed as a systematic approach to taking control of the issues that confront people on a day to day basis (Emmett, 2000). It requires the skills of: setting short-term and long-term goals, keeping time logs, prioritizing tasks, making to-do lists and scheduling, and organizing one's workspace (Claessens et al., 2007). Research indicated that most time management techniques require minimal common sense strategies (Crouch, 2005; Hemphill, 2000). In fact, many researchers agreed that time management requires little effort, yet it promotes efficient work practices by highlighting insignificant items that lead to effective use of time by focusing on high priority activities (Paul, 2003).

Katz (1987) investigated how principals spend their time while at school. The following specific problems were reported as a result of this study: (1) too much time is spent completing the amount of required paperwork; (2) not enough time is spent on instructional leadership; and (3) unnecessary time is spent dealing with marginal staff. Edwards (1990) found that a significant relationship exists between job satisfaction and time management skills of principals regardless of years in the principalship, school size, school location, gender and per pupil expenditure. According to Hager (2006), the following is a list of the five worst mistakes people make with their time:

(1) Spending time on concerns that are not chosen priorities; (2) underestimating the time tasks actually take; (3) allowing too many interruptions; (4) saying "yes" too often; and (5) not getting help. (p.124)

Tracy (2004) provided a list of seven major time wasters in the world of work that he has derived from hundreds of time management studies and opinion surveys.

(1) Telephone interruptions; (2) Unexpected visitors; (3) Meetings; (4) Firefighting and emergencies; (5) Procrastination; (6) Socializing and idle conversations; and (7) Indecision and delay (p.139)

Likewise, Jensen (2003), asked more than 5,000 people to rank the biggest time wasters. The following list is a result of his ongoing research since 1992.

(1) Meetings; (2) Dealing with communication from others; (3) Communicating to others; (4) Your boss micromanaging or undervaluing you; and (5) Work tools and processes designed for company success, but not necessarily yours. (p.104)

Time wasters have been classified by Hager (1991) as 'easy to correct' and 'difficult to correct' as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Hager's (1991) Classification of Time Wasters

Easy to Correct	Difficult to Correct
Poor filing system	Negative work environment
Absence of priorities	Heavy staff turnover
Open-door policy	Handling student discipline
Inadequately trained secretaries	Inability to deal with visitors
Too many meetings	Hasty action without proper thought
Telephone interruptions	Trying to cope with too many tasks
Lack of delegating skill	

Procrastination

Procrastination; which entails putting off or delaying or deferring an action to a later time; is such a problem that there have been several books and professional journal articles written to specifically find ways to move past this road block to getting the task at hand accomplished (e.g. Crouch, 2005; Emmett, 2000). Tracy (2004) stated that "the tendency to procrastinate is the primary reason that many people lead lives of quiet desperation and retire poor" (p. 159). The problem is not that people don't know what to do or how to do it; the problem is that people find ways to put it off until tomorrow or the next day until it is too late (Emmett, 2000). Eventually people find that there are no more tomorrows.

Procrastination has the ability to paralyze effectiveness if it is not consciously addressed in a strategic manner (Kobert, 1980). The main reason people find it difficult to overcome procrastination and work on a particular task is that they don't enjoy it (Ramsey, 1994). Even when they do enjoy what they're working on, it's easier to get themselves to work on small problems than big ones (Ramsey, 1994).

Tracy (2007) provided a list of the 7 steps needed in developing a sense of urgency in your life:

(1) Set worthwhile goals; (2) Visualize your tasks as complete; (3) Practice positive affirmations; (4) Set clear deadlines for yourself; (5) Refuse to make excuses; (6) Reward for completion of a task; and (7) Accept full responsibility for completion of a job (p. 163)

Telephone

Fitzwater (1996) considered the mismanagement of telephone usage as a primary source of time wastage. On the contrary, Hager (2006) saw the potential for the telephone to be utilized as a time saver. As a good compromise, Tracy (2004) suggested seven ways to deal with telephone interruptions:

1. Use the telephone as a business tool: Get on and off the phone fast. Don't waste time socializing on the phone when at work.
2. Have calls screened: Find out who is on the phone and what he wants before answering.
3. Have calls held: Whenever possible, set aside periods of the day when interruptions are not allowed. Don't become a slave to a ringing phone.
4. Set clear callback times: When returning calls, if people are not there, leave a message and a time for them to call back.
5. Batch calls: Use the learning curve. Make all telephone calls at once. Don't spread them out throughout the day.
6. Plan calls in advance: Think about a business call as a meeting, and write out an outline or agenda.
7. Take good notes: The power is on the side of the person with the best notes. (p.143)

Similarly, Hager (2006) suggested that principals learn the technique of "batching calls" which means that they return all calls in one block of time. By this a proper management of telephone calls can be made.

Paper Work

Hemphill (1996) said that paperwork requires decisions, but there are only three that can be made: toss it, file it or act on it. She went on to state that over the years she has found the problem is not that too much information flows into the office; it's that too little flows out. Therefore, the information is getting stuck and so does the person who does not make a decision of what to do with it the first time he or she handles it.

Tracy (2004), stated that there are four things that you can do with any piece of paper:

1. Throw it away: One of the best time management tools at home or the office is a waste basket. The fastest way to save time in reading anything is to simply throw it away and not read it at all.
2. Delegate it to someone else: When picking up a piece of paper, ask if there is someone else who should be acting on this matter.
3. Take personal action: Special focus needs to be placed on those items that must be completed.
4. File it for future reference: Remember that 80% of the papers filed are never needed, used or seen again. (p. 58-9)

Principals need to learn how to intentionally discipline themselves in such a manner that each and every day they start with a clean workspace and finish with one too (Crouch, 2005). Hemphill (2002) stated the clutters of paperwork that are left unfinished or not acted upon at all that remains in piles on the desk are distracting and potentially intimidating. It can be an

extremely satisfying and rewarding experience to leave or arrive at the office to find a clean organized workspace. Tracy (2004) recommended making it a habit of finishing what you start.

Meetings

Buckingham & Clifton (2001) understood meetings are a necessary business strategy for exchanging information, solving problems and reviewing progress. However, they must be managed accordingly taking into consideration need, time and cost. Hager (2006) recognized the fact that meetings can be very expensive when you take into consideration each person's pay that is in attendance. Fitzgerald (1996) stated that meetings have a profound positive or negative impact on the morale of an organization depending on how they are held. Knowing this, principals need to be sure that teacher meetings such as, in-house staff development and/or regular staff meetings are meaningful and practical geared toward teaching and learning.

Tracy (2004) claimed that meetings are the third major time waster in the world of work and suggested 7 ways to make meetings more efficient:

(1) Is the meeting necessary?; (2) Write an agenda; (3) Start and stop on time; (4) Cover important items first; (5) Summarize each conclusion; (6) Assign specific responsibility; and (7) Keep notes and circulate minutes (p.167).

Emails

According to Jensen (2003) the upside of email is it can bring the world to you and the downside is that it can bring the noisy, unfiltered, unfocused and undesired world to you. Principals need to manage their virtual doors. The key to "continuously eliminating three-quarters of what comes to them is accepting that they have to change how they scan information" (p. 18). According to email filtering company Brightmail, more than 2 billion emails every month are unsolicited bulk email which makes up a whopping 36 percent of all email traveling over the internet.

Most people use email as a task management tool bouncing from one task to the next. Jensen (2003) said that most of our bouncing is unfocused, undisciplined and bounces back and forth: opening one email because it's from a friend and the next because it relates to work. Jensen goes on to say that if both the subject and the sender fail to create the reaction of "I have to read or scan this today", then hit delete immediately. Jensen (2003) stated that once you have deleted the unimportant emails through scanning then it is time to apply his 'CLEAR' model to the remaining:

- **C**onnected – to current projects and workload
- **L**ist next steps – what should be done after reading the email
- **E**xpectations – what success looks like
- **A**bility – how to get things done: lists tools and support
- **R**eturn – what's in it for me? (p.39)

Delegation

In order to achieve everything a principal is capable of achieving, and to be able to concentrate on those few tasks that will make the greatest contribution to the school, a principal must become

excellent at delegation. According to Tracy (2004), a principal needs to continually be asking himself or herself the following questions:

- Who else could do this job?
- Who can do the job better?
- Can the job be eliminated?

Delegation is an essential element of any principal's job. Used effectively it provides real benefits for everyone involved. Proper delegation will enable the principal to the best possible results while empowering others in the school community. Heller (1998) found that excellent delegators are able to motivate and develop staff, build loyalty and give and receive feedback that will increase the confidence of others that will define a person as a skilled and trusted delegator. Heller (1998) continued by stating that in order for a person to be a successful delegator he or she must understand the 5 stages of delegation:

1. Analysis – sorting tasks to be delegated.
2. Appointment – naming the delegate.
3. Briefing – defining the task.
4. Control – monitoring and encouraging.
5. Appraisal – reviewing and revising (p. 47).

Tracy (2004) listed six steps to effectively delegate tasks to others that appear to be similar to Heller's 5 stages of delegation. Tracy goes on to say that if any of the steps are neglected, you run the risk of miscommunication, misunderstandings, demoralization and poor performance.

(1) Match the person to the job; (2) Agree on what is to be done; (3) Explain how the job should be done; (4) Have employees provide feedback on what has been said; (5) Set a deadline for completion; and (6) Manage the expectations (p. 132).

METHOD

Research Tool

Based on an extensive review of the literature of time-management, the researchers developed a survey instrument consisting of 51 questions. The instrument was piloted on a sample comprised of 25 school principals and few amendments for language and syntax were introduced. The instrument consisted of three sections: A, B and C. Section A, consisting of 8 questions, collected demographic information about participants. Section B, consisting of 22 items, requested principals to describe their time spent on management/organizational items; while section C, also consisting of 22 items, requested principals to describe their time spent on instructional leadership items. A four point instead of a five point likert scale was used to rank principals' perceptions of time management. The purpose of the four point scale was to prevent regression to the mean. Response choices were 1=Rarely or Never, 2=Occasionally, 3=Often, 4=Always. To simplify statistical treatment, "Rarely or Never" responses were recoded and grouped with "Occasionally" in determining mean scores. Therefore, mean scores were coded to read 1=Rarely or Never and/or Occasionally, 2= Often, and 3=Always.

The Sample

The survey was distributed to 103 private school principals during a local conference held at a private university in Beirut. Along with the survey a cover letter and an informed consent form were attached beside the full contact information of the researchers. The cover letter detailed the purpose of the study, guarantee of anonymity for participants and how data will be used. Principals were invited to complete the questionnaire and return it back, along with the signed consent form, to the given address by regular mail, as a scanned document via email or fax. Only 83 surveys were returned, out of which 60 questionnaires were usable. The response rate was approximately 60%. Respondents were private school principals from different regions across the country.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS 18.0 for windows. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize the properties of the mass of data collected from the respondents. Means scores, standard deviations and percentages were calculated per each item of the survey instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

Table 2, which represents the demographics of the sample, indicates that the majority of the sample was comprised of female principals (53.3%). The age of the majority of participants was more than 46 years (51.5%) and were geographically dispersed across the various governorates of Lebanon, yet with greatest concentration in Beirut (48.1%). 35% of participants had teaching experience between 11-15 years and 45% had a principalship experience between 6-10 years. Finally, the majority of the sample were holders of none educational Bachelor degrees (64.5%) and only 41.8% of participants received leadership training during their course of school leadership.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

	%
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	45.0
Female	53.3
No Response	3.3
<i>Age (Years)</i>	
Less than 25	0.0
26-35	11.6
36-45	36.9
46 and above	51.5
<i>Geographical Distribution</i>	
Beirut Governorate	48.1
Mount Lebanon Governorate	12.9
Northern Lebanon Governorate	3.5
Bekaa Governorate	16.2
Southern Lebanon Governorate	5.9
Nabatieh Governorate	3.4
<i>Experience in Principalship (Years)</i>	
1-3	35.0
4-10	6.6
11-15	45.0
16-20	6.6
21 or more	6.6
<i>Teaching Experience (Years)</i>	
5 or Less	13.3
6-10	35.0
11-15	20.0
16-20	13.3
21 or more	18.3
<i>Highest Degree Held</i>	
End of School Certificate or less	17.2
Bachelors (Faculty of Education Graduates)	12.3
Bachelors (Graduated from faculties other than Education)	64.5
Masters	6.0
PhD	0.0
<i>Previous Leadership Training</i>	
No	58.2
Yes	41.8

Table 3. Frequency Rating of Management/Organizational Tasks

<i>Items</i>	<i>Rarely Never</i>	<i>Occasional</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 Have a secretary screen your calls by referring them to other offices or staff members?	8	10	24	1	1.87	.999
2 Batch your returning of calls into one block of time?	30	28	2	0	.1	.100
3 Use a secretary to make appointments for you?	19	8	23	1	1.4	0.10
4 Schedule your day by appointment only?	29	21	9	1	.7	.008
5 Fix office hours for any staff?	6	8	24	2	1.05	.852
6 Make daily priorities lists?	4	9	35	1	2.02	.956
7 Work on priorities in the order you set?	30	28	2	0	.1	.007
8 Focus on one task at a time?	30	28	2	0	.1	.006
9 Set deadlines for yourself and staff?	0	2	29	2	2.45	.565
10 Place a limit on the number of scheduled meetings?	15	15	24	6	1.35	.971
11 Set begin and end times for meetings?	5	16	26	1	1.78	.885
12 Hold weekly administrative meetings?	30	28	2	0	.1	.007
13 Place a time limit on un-scheduled meetings/visitors?	35	23	1	1	.1	.003
14 Remain standing while dealing with an unannounced visitor?	29	21	9	1	.7	.005
15 Deal with unexpected visitors outside your office when possible?	30	20	9	1	.65	.004
16 Have your secretary deal with unexpected visitors and arrange for an appointment if necessary?	12	22	24	2	1.27	.821
17 Obtain all the facts of every situation before you make a decision?	0	7	23	3	2.38	.691
18 Allow your assistants to make decisions related to their area(s) of responsibility?	29	21	9	1	.7	.001
19 Attempt to keep your desk clear of materials except those necessary for completing your top priorities?	35	23	1	1	.1	.006
20 Have your secretary open your mail to sort and prioritize it for you?	29	23	7	1	.55	.014
21 Act upon paperwork as soon as it touches your desk?	26	27	4	3	.73	.021
22 Group your letter, email or memo reading into one block of time during the day?	35	23	1	1	.1	.011

Table (4) indicates all the mean scores obtained for the fulfillment of instructional tasks were below average ($M < 1.5$). This initial finding indicates that school principals do not give enough of their time for leading instruction in their schools. The highest mean scores principals received on instructional leadership tasks related to meeting with teachers regarding instructional issues ($M = 1.4$, $SD = .008$); followed by celebrating staff and student achievements ($M = 1.2$, $SD = .002$); followed by attending meetings with MEHE/CERD or other governmental organization ($M = 1.10$, $SD = .006$); then equally followed by overseeing test administration in school ($M = 1.02$, $SD = .062$) and reading professional journals ($M = 1.02$, $SD = .002$); then equally followed by facilitating professional development opportunities for their teachers ($M = 1.00$, $SD = .006$) and participating in individual teacher evaluation at the end of the year ($M = 1.00$, $SD = .002$).

Only the previous 7 items were above 1.00 mean score. The rest 15 items were below a mean score of 1.00 which is quite a very low value. These items include: reflecting on personal performance ($M = .72$, $SD = .046$); analyzing test results to guide instruction ($M = .7$, $SD = .008$); monitoring curriculum issues ($M = .7$, $SD = .001$); visiting classrooms ($M = .7$, $SD = .018$); involving professionals to design professional development programs for teachers ($M = .7$, $SD = .008$); meeting with students regarding academic issues ($M = .6$, $SD = .012$); leading staff development meetings ($M = .6$, $SD = .001$); engaging in personal professional development activities ($M = .6$, $SD = .018$); discussing coordinators' departmental plans ($M = .6$, $SD = .018$); attending coordinators' meetings with teachers ($M = .2$, $SD = .002$); revisiting school improvement plans ($M = .2$, $SD = .001$); overseeing extracurricular activities in school ($M = .2$, $SD = .002$); planning professional development for admin team ($M = .1$, $SD = .108$); assessing school climate and culture ($M = .1$, $SD = .563$); and supporting teachers in their classrooms ($M = .1$, $SD = .001$).

Again the image of how school principals spend their time on instructional activities is a gloomy one. This is not surprising having analyzed Table (3). In fact, school principals who are unable to manage the time they allot for management/organizational issues often miss effective involvement in instructional activities. This is consistent with the Literature of time management of school principals that indicate that in the best case scenario, principals spend 70 % of their time on administrative tasks; thus allowing for only 30% of their time to be utilized for leading and supervising instruction (Oosterlynck, 2011).

Thus school principals do not utilize enough time in playing the role of instructional leaders who aim to expand the repertoire of expertise of their teachers. They do not seem to be visible enough in classrooms and do not share coordinators the task of planning effectively for the development of teachers in schools. Not only this, they do not even have enough time to impact positively on school culture and climate which is a premise for any school improvement efforts (Ghamrawi, 2013). Finally, the professional growth of the admin team that is supposed to support the school principals in his/her role do not seem to receive sufficient attention within the researched sample.

Table 4. Frequency Rating of Instructional Leadership Tasks

<i>Items</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>or</i> <i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 Analyze test data to help guide instruction?	29	21	9	1	.7	.008
2 Monitor curriculum related issues as they pertain to students and teachers?	29	21	9	1	.7	.001
3 Oversee test administration in your school?	12	21	12	1	1.02	.062
4 Visit classrooms on a daily basis?	29	21	9	1	.7	.018
5 Meet with students regarding academic progress?	45	9	5	1	.6	.012
6 Meet with teachers regarding instructional issues?	19	8	23	1	1.4	.008
7 Attend coordinators' meetings with teachers?	55	3	1	1	.2	.002
8 Plan professional development for school's administrative team?	30	28	2	0	.1	.108
9 Read professional journals related to school improvement and/or instructional leadership?	11	17	28	4	1.02	.002
10 Attending variety of committee/MEHE/CERD meetings?	6	31	13	1	1.10	.006
11 Lead instructional staff development meetings?	45	9	5	1	.6	.001
12 Involve with others in planning professional development activities for the teaching staff?	28	22	9	1	.7	.008
13 Reflect on personal performance?	15	38	4	3	.72	.046
14 Engage in personal professional development?	41	13	5	1	.6	.018
15 Re-visit the schools mission statement and school improvement plans?	49	9	1	1	.2	.001
16 Facilitate opportunities for staff collaboration?	21	30	5	3	1.00	.006
17 Assess the school climate and culture?	30	28	2	0	.1	.563
18 Celebrate student and staff accomplishments?	21	27	5	6	1.2	.002
19 Oversee extracurricular activities offering at school?	49	9	1	1	.2	.002
20 Discuss with coordinators' departmental plans?	41	13	5	1	.6	.018
21 Participate in the evaluation of teachers at the end of the year?	22	29	4	4	1.00	.002
22 Support teachers in their classrooms?	30	28	2	0	.1	.001

CONCLUSION

This study provided a relatively dark image of time-management as utilized by a sample of private school principals in Lebanon. School principals seem to be overwhelmed with

organizational/ management type of tasks, the fact that deprive them from spending time on instructional activities taking place at school.

The time spent on management/organizational tasks does not seem to be utilized wisely enough. In fact, principals do not seem to be managing their offices effectively. They do not seem to be making full advantage of their secretaries to avoid interrupting them; and to support them well in organizing their mails, emails, visitors and other issues. Furthermore, principals seem to prepare priority lists for their daily activities; however they do not seem to be able to adhere to them. They are confronted with interrupting visitors and staff as well. They do not seem to fix weekly office hours for staff, nor do they seem to be holding meetings with administrative staff which could have the effect of minimizing their visits to the principals' office. They do not seem to master the techniques that would help them deal with such interruptions, nor those that help them save time such as batching calls, focusing on one task at a time, managing their desktops, deciding when meetings should be held and when they are not necessary. Finally they do not seem to be practicing delegation effectively as they do not reflect a proper dependence on their assistants.

On the other hand, principals' time that they allot for getting involved in instructional activities at school also seems to be mismanaged. Firstly, as stated earlier, a very limited time is devoted for this purpose. This goes opposite to the literature of effective leadership which assures the importance of instructional leadership as a basic component for effective school leadership (Claesssens et al., 2007). However, the literature also states that this is the case with most school principals whereby in the best case scenarios, principals seem to succeed at devoting 30% of their total time for the sake of getting involved in instructional activities at their schools (Oosterlynck, 2011).

Within this dimension, principals involved in the sample seems to be primarily concerned with student assessment; are inclined to promote their own growth through reading professional articles; and share in facilitating their teachers through end-of-year evaluations, through meeting with them regarding instructional issues and through thinking of professional development opportunities that serve them. Besides they attend meetings conducted by official educational agencies such as the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education or the Lebanese National Center for Research and Development. They would also celebrate achievements whether accomplished by teachers or students at school. However, all these concerns remain below the average.

Other important instructional tasks that are quite overlooked include: analyzing student results; curriculum monitoring and development; visiting classrooms and supporting teachers in classes; meeting with students to discuss their results; attending teachers' meetings with the coordinators and planning professional growth of teachers with coordinators; planning professional development for their admin teams, leading teachers' professional development; engaging in personal professional development or practicing reflective practice; contributing to school climate and culture; and contributing to extra-curricular activities planning at school.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The sample of this study is one of the limitations confronting the validity of the study. In fact, only private school principals took part in it and the sample size was included only 60 participants. In addition, geographically, the sample was mainly localized in the Beirut Governorate (48.1%). Some governorates were under represented in the sample including Northern Lebanon and Southern Lebanon Governorates. According to Central Administration of Statistics (2012), the Northern Governorate of Lebanon bears the highest concentration of schools across the country, and it is among the least represented in the sample. Future research should attempt to involve a larger and more representative sample of school principals across Lebanon.

On the other hand, the sample included only private school principals. No principals from the public school sector were involved. Future research should involve such principals so that a more comprehensive understanding of time-management as practiced by school principals is derived.

Moreover, the methodology can be improved. The current methodology has employed self-rating by school principals. It would be more valid to request the admin team surrounding the principal to complete surveys as well. The conduction of semi-structured interviews would be an added value as well. Future research should take these points into consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggests, through a selected sample of school private principals in Lebanon, that time-management practices of school principals are not efficient enough. Principals are called to make a proper balance of time usage so that they cater equally well to organizational/management tasks as well as instructional tasks. They should be made aware of the fact that school effectiveness has been related in the literature to effective instructional leadership in schools (Elmore, 2000; King, 2002; Cotton, 2003).

On the other hand, principals are encouraged to receive training so as to improve their time-management skills. In fact, many tricks and time saviors can be acquired in simple and unsophisticated workshops. Principals, for example, should learn about the power of collaboration, delegation and prioritization.

Training providers and universities are encouraged to make use of the findings of this study in designing their school leadership preparatory courses. An empirical study conducted within the Lebanese context could be a useful tool to enhance such courses.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE LITERATURE

This study is of value for two audiences: Lebanese and international. The Lebanese library contains no single study that has addressed how school principals manipulate their time in schools. It would be useful for such principals to have an analytic review of how a sample of

them utilizes its time and hence analyze their own time management against theirs. Such an activity would be beneficial to them as it helps them use this self-evaluation to adjust their time-usage. Internationally, this last activity also applies. However, additionally, this study adds to the literature on time management which is quite engaged in the Business domain, yet is relatively inconspicuous in the education field.

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